

**REMARKS**

In view of the above amendment and following remarks, reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

By this Amendment, claims 7, 9 and 13-15 have been amended for reasons unrelated to patentability. Accordingly, Claims 1-3, 6-9 and 12-15 are currently pending in this application.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-3, 6-9 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Ikeda et al.* (Pub. No.: US 2006/0188223).

The Applicants respectfully traverse the aforementioned prior art rejection since the *Ikeda et al.* reference does not have a 35 U.S.C. §102(e) prior art date. Particularly, due to the fact the *Ikeda et al.* reference is based on a national stage of an International Application filed on or after November 29, 2000 and which was not published in English, no benefit of the international filing date nor any U.S. filing dates prior to the International Application is given for 35 U.S.C. §102(e) prior art purposes [see MPEP 706.02(f)]. Accordingly, the Examiner is kindly requested to withdraw the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted the present application is clearly allowable and the Examiner is kindly requested to promptly pass this case to issuance.

In the event, however, that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is kindly requested to contact Applicant's representative to expedite allowance of this application.

Very truly yours,

**SNELL & WILMER L.L.P.**



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